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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER
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SUBJECT: DARFUR POLITICS IN FLUX SAYS MUDAWI; AU
LEADERSHIP, DARFUR DIALOGUE ESSENTIAL

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES CAMERON HUME; REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: The Darfur peace process is approaching an inflection point, prominent Sudan human rights activist Mudawi Adam Ibrahim told Embassy officials on August 10. The DPA has become the predominant issue in the region's politics, as various factions begin to define themselves through their support or rejection of the agreement. The Government's refusal to allow a UN force means the international community must act to strengthen the AU -- not militarily, but politically. AU leadership is essential, and the time for action is now. End Summary.

"Wahid" Means "One" in Arabic

¶2. (C) Darfur politics remains highly fluid, as various factions divide and maneuver for advantage, Sudan Social Development Organization (SUDO) Chairman Dr. Mudawi Adam Ibrahim told Poloffs and USAID/OTI representatives on August 10. The Darfur Peace Agreement was designed to bring all parties in the conflict together, but has now itself become the predominant issue in Darfur politics. Within the SLM/A, Minni Minawi's decision to sign the agreement only confirmed Abdulwahid Nur's decision not to support it, Mudawi suggested, and led to Abdulwahid's June 8 public criticism of the international community for "forcing" an agreement on Darfur. But Abdulwahid had also refused to join the anti-DPA National Redemption Front (NRF), much to the displeasure of his Eritrean hosts. Abdulwahid was now completely isolated, Mudawi believed. Just as some within Abdulwahid's wing of SLM/A now sought to replace Abdulwahid with Abdel Ahmed Shafi, or another leader who would support the DPA, Eritrea now sought to replace Abdulwahid with a new leader (Abdullahif Ibrahim) who would join the NRF. Abulwahid Nur no longer had any support in Darfur, or in Eritrea, Mudawi said.

¶3. (C) The DPA has not only realigned Darfur politics, but political shifts for and against the DPA have revealed the agreement's weaknesses, Mudawi argued. The agreement was made not by the whole people of Darfur, but by a small group of people in Abuja; the real concerns of the people were largely ignored, he charged. Even those people who ostensibly support the agreement were not served by it, and supported it only because their leaders told them to do so. A lasting peace had to come from the bottom up, not from the top down, Mudawi believed, which is why the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) was so important.

AMIS Needs Stronger Leadership, not Just Greater Capacity

¶4. (C) Mudawi did not/not think that the Government of Sudan

would reverse its decision to allow a United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur. Instead, the current AU Mission in Sudan must be strengthened, not militarily but politically. AMIS did not need more money; it needed leadership. The current AU mission was not coherent, and though the AU was supposed to lead the peace process proactively, it was actually just reacting to political maneuvering on the ground. It had to engage with local communities. The international community could help, by making it clear to Sudan that the success of the AU mission rested entirely on the Government's shoulders. Moreover, the international community could appoint a special envoy to galvanize AMIS into action. But when Poloffs asked Mudawi whom he would recommend as a special envoy, or as the chairman of the AU preparatory committee for the DDDC, Mudawi drew a blank. "Perhaps Colin Powell?" he suggested half-jokingly.

Jump Start the DDDC--Now

¶ 15. (C) The way forward was not to focus on signing the DPA or convening the Ceasefire Commission, but on starting the DDDC, Mudawi argued. "This has to be a process, not an event," he said plainly. The DDDC could help create political consensus on the ground among all the peoples and factions of the region, and allow a reintegration of the people of Darfur, not just those that supported the DPA. But the international community had to help, too, by including all factions in the peace process. Condemning groups for not signing the DPA had failed to gain their support, and had only polarized Darfur politics, Mudawi charged; Minawi's appointment as Senior Assistant to the President had further complicated things. "Everyone in Darfur is sick of fighting -- even the

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Janjaweed," he observed. But things could still get worse. If the Government decides to send the Arabs against the NRF, Mudawi predicted, the Arabs would instead join the NRF against the Government and Minawi. The NRF had already fired on one SAF Antonov AN-24 -- something the SLA had never done in two years of fighting. Darfur politics was already divided between those for and against the DPA, but if these forces went to war, the humanitarian crisis would be worse than 2003. "We have to act now to stop this, not in two weeks," Mudawi said.

¶ 16. (C) Comment: Mudawi remains one of the most articulate, and most thoughtful, observers of the crisis in Darfur. He is also one of the most listened to: though he has turned down an invitation to speak at "Darfur Day" in New York in September, he does plan to attend a Darfur conference at Harvard in November. Much of what he says makes good sense. No one disputes his analysis of his AMIS' political leadership -- or lack therof -- though his critique of the DPA sounds a bit like Monday morning quarterbacking. He is also surely right that the DDDC must be started as soon as possible, but he may be wrong about an Arab-NRF alliance. We certainly hope so.

HUME